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ABSTRACT

Student development theories and student-support programs should be designed to meet the special needs of culturally diverse populations. Specifically, those responsible for teaching and helping black students must create models of human and student development that take into account the unique needs and experiences that black students bring to the college campus. Various issues specific to African-American adult development are not inclusive in traditional adult development theories. This literature review suggests that most traditional theories fail to define factors that promote black adult students' overall psychosocial development. Results reveal that most traditional theorists presumed that all adult students experience developmental tasks in a similar manner, failing to acknowledge the culture-race aspects of development. In contrast to theorists who proposed the utilization of "traditional" models of psychosocial development, nontraditional theorists suggested the conceptualization of different models to identify the unique characteristics if psychosocial development for culturally diverse black adults. A review of "nontraditional theories" suggests that analysis of black adult development should be based on three development and socialization areas: enhanced psychosocial concepts, bicultural factors, and the Afrocentric paradigm. (Contains 41 references and 2 tables.) (GCP)

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Abtract

Afrocentricity: The missing task in Black Adult Development ?

Black adult development is extremely important because of the student constituency served. Student development theories, student-support programs, curricular and extracurricular, should be designed to meet the special needs of cultural diverse populations Those responsible for teaching and helping Black students must create models of human and student development that take into account the unique needs and experiences that Black students bring to the college campus. Various issues specific to African-American adult development are not inclusive in traditional adult development theories.

Traditional theories failed to define factors that promoted the Black adult students' overall psychosocial development. Most traditional theorists presumed that all adult students experienced developmental tasks in a similar manner. The majority of adult development theories failed to acknowledge the culture-race aspects of development. As a result, culture, sex, and class may prove questionable in evaluating minorities' developmental processes .

In contrast to theorists who proposed the utilization of "traditional" models of psychosocial development, nontraditional theorists suggested the conceptualization of different models to identify the unique characteristics of psychosocial development for culturally diverse Black adults. A review of "nontraditional theories" suggested that analysis of Black adult development should be based on three development and socialization areas: enhanced psychosocial concepts, bicultural factors, and the Afrocentric paradigm.

Afrocentricity: The missing task in Black adult development?

African-American students at many colleges are heterogeneous and diverse due to demographic, social and educational backgrounds. Their needs cover a wide range as a result of the diversity. Black adult development is extremely important because of the student constituency served. Student development theories, student-support programs, curricular and extracurricular, should be designed to meet the special needs of cultural diverse populations (Schlossberg et al., 1989). A review of current literature suggests that the majority of African-American adult development literature centers on (a) racial awareness or racial identity development; (b) career choices and decisiveness; and most importantly (c) academic and social development (Cheatham et al., 1990). These factors, crucial for psychosocial development, provide a means for studying the development of African-American adult students.

Chickering and Associates (1981) noted every college and university in the country (whether public or private, 2-year or 4-year, or graduate) are in the business of shaping lives, lives that reflect much more than academic learning. Those responsible for teaching and helping Black students must create models of human and student development that take into account the unique needs and experiences that Black students bring to the college campus. Various issues specific to African-American adult development are not inclusive in traditional adult development theories (McEwen, Roper, Bryan, and Langa 1990).

While different in form and content, traditional development theories have stressed the sense of change and adaptation over the adult years. Chickering (1981) and Heath (1980) represent those who have advanced their theories on "traditional" students. The core collection of adult development theories includes Levinson et al. (1978), Gould (1975), Riegel (1975), Valliant (1977),

Sheehy (1976), and Neugarten (1969). Erikson is considered the unquestionable innovator of the field.

Traditional theories failed to define factors that promoted the Black adult students' overall psychosocial development. Most traditional theorists presumed that all adult students experienced developmental tasks in a similar manner. The majority of adult development theories failed to acknowledge the culture-race aspects of development (Fleming, 1984; Wright, 1987; and Gilson, 1990). As a result, culture, sex, and class may prove questionable in evaluating minorities' developmental processes (Wright, 1987; Gavin, 1989; and Cheatham and Slaney, 1990; and McEwen, Roper, Gryant and Langa, 1990).

In contrast to theorists who proposed the utilization of "traditional" models of psychosocial development, nontraditional theorists (Gooden, 1980:Branch-Simpson, 1985; Clay, 1985; Jeffries, 1985; Ruffin, 1985; Bowman, 1989; Herbert, 1989; Simmons, 1990; Harris, 1992; Crawley and Freeman, 1993; Jones, 1996; Littleton, 1997; and Hill-Traynham, 2000) suggested the conceptualization of different models to identify the unique characteristics of psychosocial development for culturally diverse Black adults. Although a number of "nontraditional" theorists proposed cultural-centric theories, several have incorporated segments of various "traditional" theory models.

A review of "nontraditional theories" suggested that analysis of Black adult development should be based on three development and socialization areas: enhanced psychosocial concepts, bicultural factors, and the Afrocentric paradigm. Crawley and Freeman (1993) suggested Black adults face certain psychosocial development tasks throughout their socialization and the bicultural context is the milieu wherein these tasks are accomplished. The

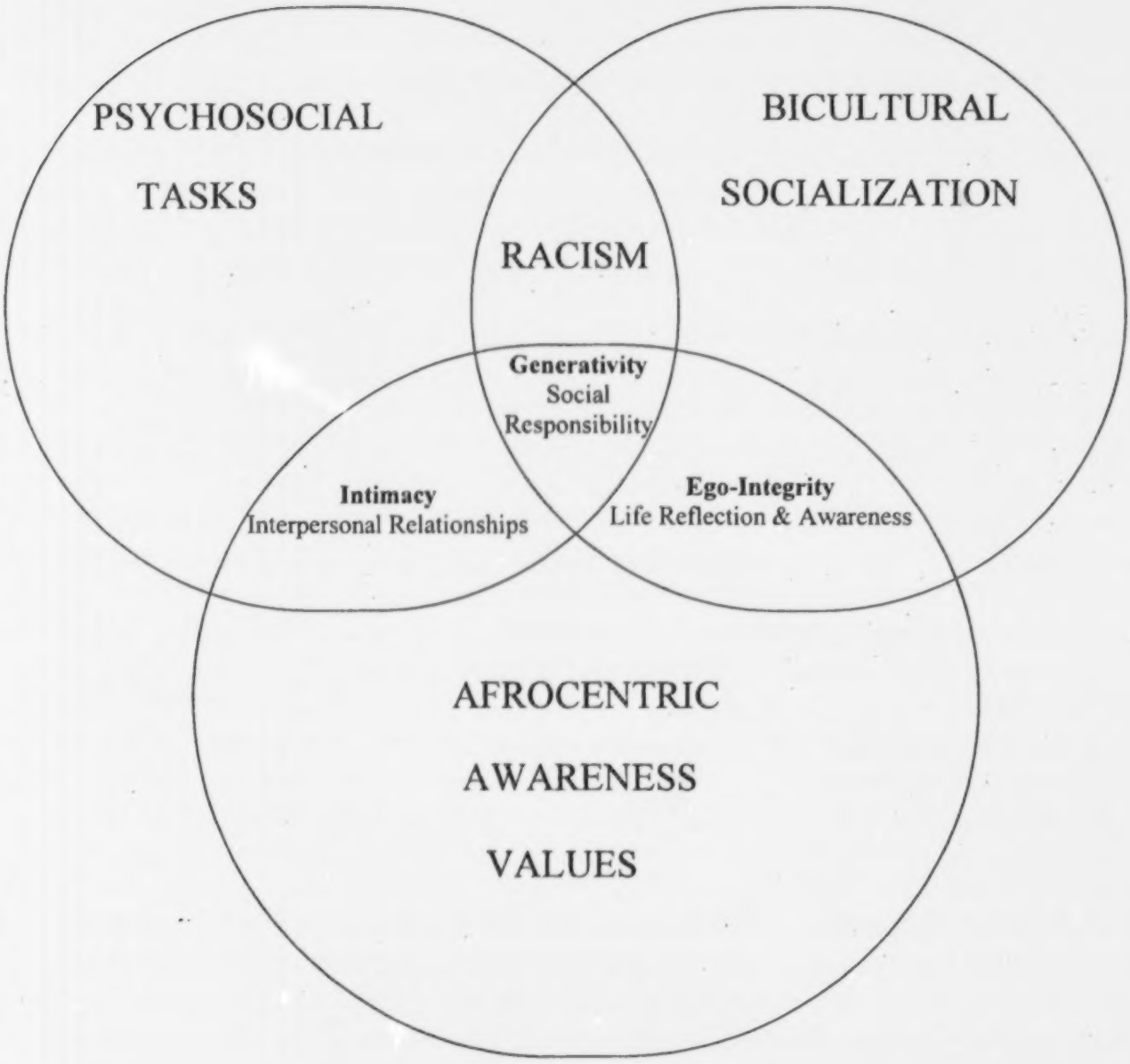
foundation through which their development and socialization must occur is the Afrocentric cultural ideology (Jeffries, 1985; Ruffin, 1985; Bowman, 1989; Herbert, 1989; Simmons, 1990; Harris, 1992; Crawley and Freeman, 1993; Jones, 1996; Littleton, 1997; and Hill-Traynham 2000). It is the Afrocentric foundation which forms the meaning of psychosocial tasks as well as interprets the bicultural milieu so it is negotiated on terms which support the essential" groundness of the African person"(Oliver 1989, p.19).

The common developmental tasks (Intimacy, Generativity, and Ego-Integrity) of adult students often go unaddressed on many college campuses (Miller and Winston, 1990). By focusing on the issues, concerns, nature and needs of Black students, colleges can develop a comprehensive philosophy for delivering effective student services that promote development. Although the individual's growth is influenced by his or her environment, colleges are challenged to design structured experiences that allow the student to develop in a positive manner

[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE]

Psychosocial Development Tasks

Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development present a viable life span approach to psychosocial development among Blacks (Bowman, 1989). In Erikson's psychosocial model, healthy development requires one to settle pivotal conflicts and master related developmental tasks at each stage of growth. While not uncritically accepting the claims of "universality" of Erikson's psychosocial stages of development, Crawley and Freeman (1993) believed those stages and their accompanying tasks were useful for explaining various aspects of the development and socialization



BLACK ADULT DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM

of Blacks. Erikson's psychosocial stages were normed on society's expectation of age-appropriate behaviors.

In essence, Erikson's theory lays out a general sense of the problems, decisions, and issues that occupy Black college students' lives. In addition, Erikson's theory suggested necessary experiences for coping with the tasks of adulthood, role experimentation, meaningful achievement, the experiencing of choice, time, and encouragement for reflection. These factors serve as general "prescriptions" that can be used as a framework of analysis for evaluating an ongoing collegiate environment or for changing such an environment to further Black adult development.

Intimacy

The fulfillment of the need for Intimacy is believed to be central to adult life satisfaction (Erikson, 1982). Intimacy is characterized by an individual's openness, lack of defensiveness, sharing, mutual caring, sensitivity and generosity. The need for Intimacy becomes most salient in young adulthood, when one faces the Intimacy vs. Isolation crisis. Higher education should encourage the capacity for Intimacy for two reasons. The ability to enter into and sustain such relationships is a major vehicle for increased self-understanding, in terms of one's motives, values, future plans, aspirations, and interpersonal style. Schlossberg (1989) noted the importance of such close interpersonal relationships can hardly be exaggerated: not only do they constitute a strong source of support in times of stress, but they also add color and warmth to what otherwise might be a drab and flat existence.

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

Although men and women seem to differ significantly in their ability to form intimate relationships, American men, in particular, tend to avoid Intimacy. A number of Black men avoid

Table 1.

Psychosocial Developmental-Socialization Chart:
Task and Issues for African-American Men

Growth and development stages/life span categories	Tasks and socialization issues
Young adulthood (20 years to 39 years)	-- establish and maintain a work lifestyle/career. *--engage in struggle against social injustices. --engage in long term committed relationship such as marriage. --establish families with children (or children free families) --establish a lifestyle. --manage and transform experiences of social injustice and social inconsistencies based of race. *--develop and implement parenting skills for instructing children how to survive and negotiate the multiracial, bicultural environment/society.
Middle Adulthood (40 years to 64)	--manage a household. --manage a career. *--continue struggle against social injustice as expressed in racism, discrimination, and prejudice. *--deepen and enhance transformation and transcendent skills in coming to terms with society's treatment of and response to one's racial/color identity. --initiate acceptance of one's biophysical changes.
Later Adulthood (65 years plus)	--accept one's life and experiences. --identify and implement new roles. *--continue struggle against social injustices and social inconsistencies. --accept one's mortality and ongoing demise.

*Task and issues most directly influence by race, ethnicity, or culture representing Crawley and Freeman's expansion of current psychosocial theoretical concepts. Source:"Themes in the Life Views of of Older and Younger African American Males," by B. Crawley and E. Freeman, 1993 Journal of African American Male Studies, 1 (1), p. 18. Copyright © 1993 by National Council of African-American Men. Reprinted and adapted with permission.

marriage primarily because they are uncertain of their ability to carry out their economic responsibilities as husbands and fathers in the face of a racially hostile world (Herbert, 1989). Psychosocial studies suggest that basic human needs for Intimacy may be seriously threatened by isolation among jobless young Blacks because work and love become more intertwined in early adulthood than in other periods (Bowman, 1989). Men respond to traumatic events differently than women. This is due in part to their inability to form interpersonal relationships outside of their marriage. Researchers speculate that this difficulty to form relationships and resolve stress contributes to the Black male's shorter life expectancy.

The timing of women's Intimacy aspirations is usually more interrupted than for men. A review of literature reported that a young man's major concern through much of his life is his career; whereas, a young woman is socialized to place her primary emphasis on family and relationships. It seems clear that returning to school often causes problems in women's established relationships, even disrupting marriages in a significant proportion of cases.

Conversely, for many women, the return to school is itself stimulated by some change in the interpersonal sphere. Jeffries (1985) contended that in Intimacy the Black female appeared to spend a period resolving unrealistic (Eurocentric) values and adapting to the realities of Black lifestyles. Specifically, resolving the universal issues of: (a) assessment of educational/career options; (b) assessment of interpersonal relationships including intimate, marital and familial options; and (c)formation of initial life scripts reflecting individual and group identities (Adams, 1983 and Jeffries, 1985).

In summary, Intimacy is much more than love making alone. Intimacy is the ability to share with and to care about another person without fear of losing one's self in the process. In the case

of Intimacy, success or failure no longer depends directly upon the parents but only indirectly as they have contributed to the individual's success or failure earlier. Intimacy need not involve sexuality; it includes the relationship between friends, parents, spouse, children, and lover (Erikson, 1982).

Generativity

It is out of the intimacies of young adulthood that Generativity becomes the task of middle age. Erikson (1982) proposed that the crisis of Generativity occurs during the middle age years. Generativity is the stage where adults begin to show concern for others beyond their immediate family. Wrightsman (1988) added that Generativity, in the broadest sense, is a reaching out, transmitting a concern for the next generation. It goes beyond one's family; the issue is now that of taking responsibility in the adult world. Those who fail to establish a sense of Generativity fall into a state of self-absorption in which their personal needs and comfort are their major concern. Generativity is a period of challenge and change in which the Black female questions and reorganizes her decision-making skills for competence and effectiveness. According to Jeffries (1985), women who fail to adapt to changing environmental conditions succumb to the maladaptive effects of depression, anxiety or submission.

Washington and Associates (1990) noted that doctoral students, at the research and dissertation stage of their program, often displayed symptoms of intenseness, single-mindedness, over-sensitivity, indifference to criticism and stagnation. As a result of their lack of research experience, students often felt depressed, discouraged, isolated, overwhelmed and incompetent to complete the doctoral program. Numerous research studies report that African American students attending college are consistently concerned with (a) financing their personal and educational needs;

(b) performing well academically; and (c) residing under comfortable living conditions, both physically and socially.

A growing number of African American students enrolled at predominantly White colleges experience classroom biases, hostile interpersonal climates and feelings of social isolation.(Chideya, 1995) Further, numerous Black students experience problems in forming informal relationships with their professors because they feel their teachers are insensitive to their problems. Levinson et al. (1978) suggested the utilization of mentoring to addressing the developmental needs of adult students.

[INSERT TABLE 2 HERE]

Mentoring addresses several of the causes of student attrition and delayed graduation, including the lack of proper academic preparation for college, the lack of knowledge about or access to social or academic resources, and the absence of a comfortable psychosocial milieu for matriculation (Gavin, 1989). Mentoring has been viewed as having two major components, one dealing with the transfer of marketable and often discipline-based skills, behaviors, and attitudes, and the other related to the social and emotional interaction that makes the transfer of knowledge and skills possible (Hill, 1989). With this view, mentoring becomes an attractive method for meeting the needs of culturally diverse students in universities.

In summary, adults in the Generativity stage display an attitude of hope for the future, regardless of current conditions. Generativity refers to the contributions to future generations through creativity and productivity in areas such as the arts and sciences. Such achievements give life meaning and enable the individual to feel that one has done something worthwhile that will leave a lasting mark in the world (Schlossberg, 1989).

Table 2.

Psychosocial Development-Socialization Chart:
Tasks and Issues for African-American Women.

Growth and development stages/life span categories	Tasks and socialization issues
Pre-adulthood	--questions and reassess preliminary life structures.
Phase III	--explores alternatives for change (modify and/or revise).
(17- 22 years)	--second identity crisis or re-emergence of the adolescent crisis.
	--separation anxiety and resolve adolescent crisis.
	--confront racial/sexual issues; acknowledge inherent differences.
	--formation of sociopolitical reality.
	--search for satisfying relationship with male.
	--decisions over childbearing issues.
	--establish preliminary life structure(work, love, peer, etc.,).
Young adulthood	--questions relating to life structure: What have I accomplished?
Phase IV	Where have I failed?What is available to me?Whom am I
(26-35 years)	-- (Psychological panic) Initial physical decline;
	--yearning for personal acknowledgment.
	--movement-autonomy.
	--integrate fragmented parts of self.
	--resolve biological panic(material yearnings).
	--urgency to obtain/maintain stable relationships.
	--revise life structure.
Middle adulthood	--establish fit between individual needs/society; extreme
Phase V	dissatisfaction with self, choices, options, life;
(35-45 years)	--urgency to change/move toward autonomy/individuation.
	-experience loss (physical decline, youth, senses, children, spouse)
	--make choices about direction of life structure.
	--acknowledges successes/failures; adapts to changes.
	--issue of loneliness; absence of intimate partners.
	--relationships/responsibilities to others.
	--rework life structure.
	--establish adult identity as a Black female.
Late adulthood	*--continue a strong religious belief through life.
Phase VI*	--belong to and/create a family network.
(65-74 years)	--view one's self as a survivor
	--maintain values to live by

Note: " An Exploratory Study of Black Adult Development Among Forty Females ages Twenty to Forty Years," by D. L. Ruffin, 1985. Dissertation Abstracts International,pp. 114 - 118
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Ego-Integrity

Erikson's (1982) task of Integrity is the culmination of one's development, a stage marked by acceptance and satisfaction in one's own life experiences. Erikson added, "There is a solidarity, a sense of calm in those persons who have taken care of things and people properly. The sense of Integrity arises from the individual's ability to reflect on past life experiences with accomplishment and satisfaction." At the other extreme is the individual who looks back upon one's life as a series of missed opportunities and missed directions. Once in the twilight years, the adult realizes that it is too late to start again. As a result, the person experiences the inevitable stage of despair.

White (1984) noted, "As a person gains a more mature awareness of the Black psychological perspective, he or she will be able to experience sorrow without being overwhelmed by a sense of despair and futility; he or she will learn how to discover one's capacity to survive, how to open oneself up to power of renewal, how to discover one's capacity to survive, how to gain strength from being part of something larger than oneself, part of a vital life force that has continued to emerge despite the harshness of oppression, and how to deal with overt racism. The Black elderly (African Griots) are like living reservoirs of Black heritage. The Black elderly serve as the vehicle through which the African consciousness is transmitted." (p. 71)

The major crisis of old age is Integrity versus Despair, and the primary goal is to become an integrated and self-accepting person. How the individual handles the crisis depends on personality characteristics that have been developing for years, as well as physical health, economic situation, and the meaningfulness of the social roles that can be played successfully (Erikson, 1982). A sense of despair in old age stems more often from health problems, financial security, social isolation, and inactivity that accompany the retiring years. Little (1995) suggested that seeking a

degree in higher education functions to: (a) improve self-esteem by enhancing some perceived insecurity; (b) increase mental activity and social interaction; (c) develop a mature sense of Generativity, and (d) lessen the grieving procedures for handling retirement or the death of a love one.

In summary, the Black elderly have built up a wealth of life experiences, they've experienced the intimacy of close relationships, contributed valuable insights into the decision-making process, and participated in the excitement and disappointment of living as life unfolds for the generations behind them. Their presence in the extended family provides a certain steadiness, a calm effect on younger middle-aged adults as they are moving through the critical periods of adult development. The alteration of one's perspective on time may be part of the process by which Integrity develops (White, 1984). Positive self-esteem among older Black students requires them to sustain a level of integrity to effectively cope with despair. Despite the importance of present economic well-being, integrity in the elderly role may depend even more on past role successes that promote Identity, Intimacy and Generativity (Bowman, 1989).

Bicultural Socialization and the Afrocentric Paradigm

A review of the literature revealed that modifications were needed in adult development theories if they were to be applicable to Black adult students. Major theoretical paradigms of development and socialization used for the majority population failed to recognize the significant aspects of Black adult life experiences. The impact of racism when compare to all other barriers (e.g., economic, social, class, and political) were the most detrimental to Black male psychosocial development (Herbert, 1989). The life span approach for Black men go beyond existing life span developmental tasks.

Bicultural Socialization

Black male adult development takes place within the complex bicultural world of: (a) the rich and nurturing socio-cultural content of the African-American experience and: (b) pro Eurocentric socialization messages which translate as " Anti-Black" (Bowman, 1989). Adult development requires a multifaceted rather than a unitary frame of reference to understand the unique environment in which Black men develop and value a broad array of life views and themes. Black men face setting important role performance goals, pressing role barriers and critical role conflicts at each stage of adult development.

Role strains could be produced by barriers in the social environment, by personal limitations or by conflicts at the environment-personal interface. The disparities between these attributes have to be resolved in order to develop a positive proactive identity. The manner in which role difficulties are perceived, interpreted and evaluated may largely distinguish maladaptive from adaptive behavioral responses (p. 129).

Examining ethnicity identifies the cultural patterns which serve as resources in promoting healthier psychosocial development. Jones (1996) concluded the positive racial/ethnic identity was initially stimulated by early childhood psychosocial factors (e.g., family, community, and school) and this identity would continue to develop through out life as a result of ensuing psychosocial experiences. Afrocentricity is recommended as an appropriated intervention paradigm for Black men. The inclusion of two additional interdependent development tasks to address Black adult development is warranted (Herbert, 1989 and Jones, 1996). The tasks include (a) the formation of an explicit individual racial identity that both acknowledges and frees the individual of racism (stereotypes) and prejudices, and (b) the formation of an individual (proactive) self concept

dedicated to the eradication and abolition of racism.

Coping with adversity was a common development theme for Black women (Simmons, 1990). Conflicting and negative messages conveyed during the female's adolescent and young adult years may transcend into negative effects during the adult development processes. Jeffries (1985) contended Black females endure a period of challenge and change in which decision-making skills are reorganized for competence and effectiveness. Women who fail to adapt to change environmental conditions succumb to the maladaptive effects of depressions, anxiety, or submission.

Ruffin's (1985) study confirmed that developmental changes in Black women are expressed through changes in their life structure (e.g.. racism, career, love, interpersonal relationships, marriage, and family relationships). Black women who compromise and reconcile the life issues (mental, physical, and emotion well being) find perspective and resolution. Black female adult development involves: (a) a sense of Afrocentric identity; (b) a sense of control; (c) a sense of belonging: and (d) a sense of religion and spirituality (Harris, 1992). The utilization of an Afrocentric model is appropriate for assessing the growth and development of the Black woman.

The Afrocentric paradigm

The Afrocentric paradigm is a value system based on African civilization and philosophy. Afrocentricity is an ideology that encourages Blacks to transcend their problems by reclaiming traditional African values. According to Oliver (1989) the Afrocentric paradigm emphasizes humanity's oneness with nature, spirituality, and collectivism. This perspective is contradictive to Eurocentric values, which encourage controlling nature, materialism and individualism. Eurocentric values fail to facilitate African history and the African-American experience (Majors and Billson,

1993).

McEwen, Roper and Langa (1990) posited their were several Afrocentric issues specific to Black adult development that were not inclusive in traditional theories. Such issues include: (1) the unique psycho-history of Blacks in this country and the adaptions that Blacks must make: (2) the "Colonized" nature of Black existence in this country; (3) the extended nature of the Black family and Black home life; (4) the unique educational/socialization role of the Black family; (5) the oral tradition within the Black community; (6) the impact of racial hostility and environmental pressures; (7) the unique character of Black Americans; (8) the psychological dynamics that accompany being a "caste-like" minority; (9) representing a "rejected strain" in society and being codified; (10) attempting to reconcile two identities; (11) the philosophical connections to African tradition, action/beliefs; (12) elastic concept of time, kinship tradition, survival focus (Collective vs. Individual) and spiritual disposition; and (13) the view of people as an integrated whole (p. 430).

The Afrocentric paradigm is a collective philosophy--underpinned by meaningful cultural traditions and institutions--that emphasize cooperation, mutual respect, commitment, love of family, race, community and nation. Most importantly, the Afrocentric paradigm attempts to inspire adults to structure their behavior and values toward the elevation of the community interests over those of the individual (Majors and Billson, 1993) The Afrocentricity theory has the ability to facilitate a more holistic and healthy perspective for understanding Black aspirations, strengths and potential. Afrocentricity serves as a task for a more realistic conceptualization of Black adult development (Asante, 1989).

Summary

As America's colleges continue to transform their student development policies to adhere to needs of their culturally diverse student populations, they must consider socio-cultural factors into their conceptualization (Jordan-Cox, 1987 and McEwen et al., 1990). Although considerable evidence suggested that various aspects of Black adult development appear consistent with basic patterns of "traditional" student development, there are certain race and cultural factors that infringe on the framework of psychosocial development (Wright, 1987).

Black adults continue to change through out adulthood and many of the changes occur in sequential phases. The formation of an initial adult identity remains a complex task. Successful adult development involves the conscious and unconscious integration of racism into their racial and adult identity. Current forms of racial discrimination and racism, arising out a national history of enslavement, are not only barriers to Black achievement, but also Black psychosocial development. Of all factors (economic, social, class, and race) associated with the many barriers facing Blacks in America, those associated with race are the most persuasive (Herbert, 1989). The literature overwhelmingly supports the utilization of the Afrocentricity theory as a method of conceptualizing more realistic paradigms of Black adult development. The future inclusion of the Afrocentricity theory is warranted in facilitating the development of the Black adult student.

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